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Viewing cable 08LONDON991, UK ENERGY MINISTER WICKS TELLS U/S JEFFERY THAT

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08LONDON991	2008-04-07 15:12	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN	Embassy London

Appears in these articles:

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 000991

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/01/2018
TAGS: [ECON](#) [ENRG](#) [SENV](#) [KGHG](#) [UK](#)
SUBJECT: UK ENERGY MINISTER WICKS TELLS U/S JEFFERY THAT
"HOMEGROWN" SOLUTIONS AND DIVERSITY OF SUPPLY ARE KEY

Classified By: A/ECONMIN SANDRA CLARK FOR REASONS 1.4 B & D

¶1. (C/NF) SUMMARY: UK Energy Minister Malcolm Wicks, Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) told Under Secretary for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs Reuben Jeffery that the UK was taking an assertive public and private position on climate change, but that energy security was equally important to HMG (if not necessarily to the UK public.) The UK will experience a severe decrease in North Sea gas and oil stocks by 2020, and will need to improve its diversity of supply as well as move towards "homegrown" measures such as nuclear and renewables. Wicks said the UK is concerned about Russia and Gazprom, and is working hard within the EU and with Caspian players to develop the Southern Corridor. END SUMMARY

¶2. (C/NF) Minister Wicks told U/S Jeffery on March 31 that climate change and energy security went hand-in-hand for the UK, and stressed UK leadership on climate change issues were supported strongly by the British public. As evidence, Wicks pointed to a bill in Parliament targeting carbon emission reductions of 60% by 2050. Wicks stressed, however, that energy security was equally important for the UK, although less well-understood by the general public. The UK will see its indigenous gas and oil stocks drop by eight percent per year over the next several years, and will import 60-80 percent of its oil and gas supply by 2020. To address this deficit the UK needs to ensure a diversity of supply, and has been in discussions with Qatar and Norway, Wicks said.

¶3. (C/NF) In addition to diversifying supply, the UK is building up its "homegrown supply" of nuclear and renewable energy and is moving towards clean coal and carbon capture. Wicks, also a Member of Parliament, said the UK is seeing increased public and parliamentary support for nuclear energy due to climate change and security concerns. He added that the UK is also concerned about Russia/Gazprom, and is working with the EU to develop a more robust European policy. "The West needs to get smarter about energy", Wicks told Jeffery, and to focus more on Turkmenistan and the Southern Corridor.

¶4. (C/NF) U/S Jeffery explained that the U.S. is working hard on energy issues, both domestically, and in support of European efforts to diversify supply and create new routes to markets. He explained it was important that the U.S. keep pace with European efforts to protect its own interests. Wicks expressed appreciation for USG support and commented that the more pipelines there were the more routes and trading relations for all of Europe, although the UK would benefit only indirectly (he said if the Southern Corridor were completed tomorrow very little gas would flow to the UK.) Wicks recalled being impressed during his September 2007 visit to Turkmenistan with President Berdimuhamedov's openness to Western (and Chinese and South Asian) investment and Foreign Minister Merodov's intelligence, and noted relations between countries in the region are also improving. Richard Marriott, Senior Economist, BERR, stressed that the UK believes it is companies that build pipelines, not governments, but that the UK takes as a positive sign Berdimuhamedov's expressions of interest in working with others to improve his country's energy infrastructure. In a sign of UK-Caspian cooperation, the UK is bringing over a small delegation of Turkmenistani officials for meetings and an energy conference in mid-April. The UK will focus on educating the Turkmen on Production Sharing Agreements, and will take them to Aberdeen, Scotland to see the oil and gas facilities.

¶5. (C/NF) Wicks said one of the challenges for Turkmenistan was dealing with diffuse, democratic governments and their independent private sector companies. President Berdimuhamedov had told Wicks that when China visited, they would bring a pipeline project in one hand, and the authority to ink the project in the other. However, when the West visited, the governments did not necessarily speak for the companies, and the decision-making process was much slower. The UK is currently focused on Turkey's role and said U.S./EU/UK pressure is helpful, and is determining what the market-based architecture of energy deals in the region would

look like. Jeffery stressed the need to move forward with Nabucco now as a way to keep up the pressure to diversify and show the Caspian region that the West is interested and involved. In describing the need to cooperate with the private sector, Wicks mentioned the difficulties of determining whether certain UK energy companies were "batting for the UK" or working solely for themselves and protecting their interests vis-a-vis Russia.

¶6. (U) Wicks will be in Washington April 6-7 for meetings with Energy Secretary Bodman before heading to Alberta Canada.

¶7. (SBU) U/S Jeffery and Ambassador Tuttle also met on March 31 with Tony Hayward, CEO, BP, to discuss the company's activities and Russian investigations. Hayward is heading to Moscow soon to meet with private and public players to assess BP's interests.

¶8. (U) U/S Jeffery cleared this cable.

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Tuttle